

## *From the Pastor's Desk, .....*

The roots of Thanksgiving go back to 1621 when grateful Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts, thanked God for a modest harvest that pulled them through a very challenging time in their journey and quest for religious freedom. They returned thanks to God for they knew that without God's help they would not have survived.

Thanksgiving Day is a special day. As a national holiday it is different from all others. On it, we do not celebrate a great victory in battle. Nor do we honor a great person. It is a day when we thank God for the blessings we, as a nation, enjoy.

We are called to remember to pause long enough to think about what God has done for us. It is so easy to lose track of our blessings in the helter-skelter environment in which we find ourselves. How often we forget to give God thanks for our daily bread, for the hands that prepared it, for the homes that shelter us as we take our daily bread. How often we forget that all we have is a gift from God.

We read in Deuteronomy, "When you have eaten and are satisfied, you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you." Izaak Walton once said, "God has two dwellings one in heaven and the other in a meek and thankful heart." We can have thankful hearts when we focus on God and what God has done for us.

Not everyone is as fortunate this Thanksgiving season as you and I. If we are truly to experience the joy of this season, we need to remember the needy and less fortunate. Thanksgiving reminds us of our interdependence with other persons our need for one another. No person is an island. We share a common humanity, and if there are those in need, it is our responsibility as followers of Jesus to see that their needs are met.

The Pilgrims knew the safest place to stand in the storm was in the presence of God. They knew that God was the source of their blessings, and they kept their promises to God and gave thanks. This was as important to their well-being as the food on the table. It kept their souls refreshed and full of joy. It was this same focus on God that allowed St. Paul to write in I Thessalonians 5:17-18, "Pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." It was this same focus on God that allowed Jesus to give thanks even in his darkest hours. We read in the Bible, "On the night in which he was betrayed, he broke bread and gave thanks . . . ."

We sometimes forget that the only hands God has is our hands. A hand stretched out in love to "one of the least of these" is a hand that reflects a thankful heart. Maya Angelou once said something very beautiful and meaningful: "Giving," she said, "liberates the soul of the believer." I believe that is true. We don't help others that they might be saved but that we might be saved from the greed and the insensitivity that captures the soul of the ungrateful.

Yours in Christ, 

*Pastor Michele Kaufman*